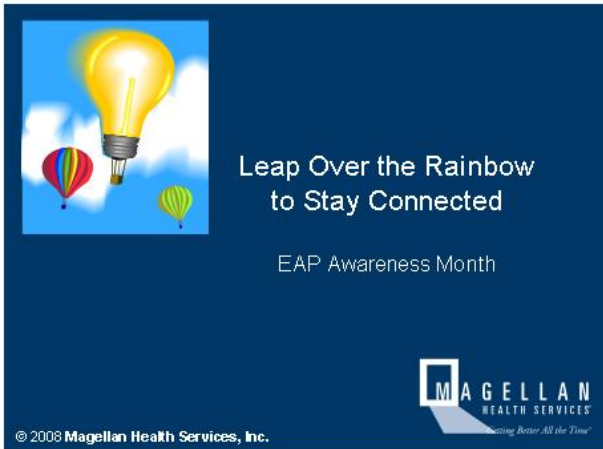


LEAP OVER THE RAINBOW TO STAY CONNECTED

Note-Taking Handout



The Issues

Dealing with change at work and home

Dealing with stress from change or other sources

Communicating effectively with those around us during times of stress and change

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Symptoms

- Keeping score
- Giving orders
- Resenting intrusions
- Not having fun
- Losing perspective
- Health complaints
- Communication conflict



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LEAP OVER THE RAINBOW TO STAY CONNECTED

Note-Taking Handout

Responses to Change

Victim

Survivor

Navigator



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Coping Strategies

- Work/home barriers
- Keep perspective
- Contract
- Validate
- Make requests
- Have fun - laugh
- Take care of yourself
- Communicate



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Your Assistance Program

Call toll-free 1-800-308-4934
or visit us at
www.Magellanhealth.com/member

24 hours a day/7 days a week
Prepaid
Confidential



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Participant Handouts

For

Leap Over the Rainbow to Stay Connected



Assessing Your Response to Change and Stress

We respond to change and its demands individually. Our reactions tend to vary according to the situation and our perception of our ability to cope.

To better understand your coping style:

1. On a scale from 1 to 4, place a mark on the line to indicate how you respond in each area. For example, if you tend to get overwhelmed very often, place a mark under the “1” or “2.” If you’re usually calm, make a mark under the “3” or “4.”
2. Put stars next to your five strongest traits/behaviors. You will want to count on these strengths to help you meet the new expectations of your circumstances.
3. Circle the five traits/behaviors that you struggle with most.

	1	2	3	4	
Overwhelmed	_____				Calm
Controlling	_____				Ability to let go
Tense	_____				Relaxed
Depressed	_____				Upbeat/Cheerful
Rigid	_____				Flexible
Exhausted	_____				Energetic
Fearful	_____				Challenged
Dependent	_____				Self-reliant
Insecure	_____				Confident
Impatient	_____				Patient
Defensive	_____				Open
Humorless	_____				Sense of humor
Risk averse	_____				Risk seeking
Moody	_____				Even-tempered
Passive	_____				Assertive
Disorganized	_____				Organized
Pessimistic	_____				Optimistic
Closed to change	_____				Open to change
Negative body language	_____				Positive body language

The Victimeter

☹ Victim

I act like a *victim* when I don't have any hope and am not thinking of and acting on a solution to my problem.

I am at sea during a storm and I assume I am going to drown.

☺ Survivor

I act like a *survivor* when I have hope during a difficult situation BUT I am not thinking of and acting on a solution to my problem.

I am at sea during a storm and I say, "I have been through storms before. Storms come and go. Somehow I will get by."

☺ Navigator

I act like a *navigator* when I have hope during a difficult situation AND am creating solutions to my problems.

I am at sea during a storm and I say, "I am neither in charge of the sea nor of the storm, but I am in charge of my boat. I know what I need to do to maximize my chances of survival."

Communication

Communication happens all the time, but it's not always effective. Effective communication is more than an exchange of words. It's successfully being understood and understanding others. Just because you're talking to someone doesn't mean that you're getting your thoughts across. There are three basic techniques that you can use to become an effective communicator: active listening, validating and positive assertiveness.

Active Listening

Active listening conveys respect and interest for the views of the other person. It involves:

- Putting aside your views and really listening. Even if you disagree, give your full attention and listen to the other person's point of view.
- Allowing the other person to talk. Wait until he or she finishes before responding.
- Hearing what is being said. You will have a better understanding of where the other person is coming from.
- Paying attention to how it is said. For example, a person may say, "I'm not angry with you," but his or her tone of voice and facial expressions suggest that he or she really is angry.

Validating

Validating is a way of demonstrating that you are an active listener. By reassuring the other person that you understand his or her point, you are successfully validating his or her feelings and opinions. Successful validating involves:

- Repeating a summary of what you think the other person said.
- Asking if your summary is correct.

These two steps show that you respect the other person enough to take the time to understand his or her point. For example, when your spouse tells you that he is upset because he's always the one who walks the dog, you might respond with, "You're upset because you feel I haven't been doing my fair share of work. Is this right?" Validating also helps people feel confident in expressing their thoughts, an important element in effective communication. Try it!

Active Listening Pointers

- Give your **undivided attention**. Put down your paper or telephone, turn off the TV and look at your co-worker, partner, or child.
- Pay attention to the **non-verbal messages** of body language and tone. This will tell you what the other person needs or wants from you. It will also tell you when “yes I can get that report for you” really means “not in a millions years will I get that report for you.”
- **Listen** more than you talk. Substitute listening for lecturing and rescuing (i.e., solving problems) when all they want is a sympathetic ear.
- **Use eye contact and body language** (e.g., open body position, face the speaker, nod, and smile [where appropriate]). This tells people you are listening to them and that what they say is important.
- **Mirror** their body language with yours. Lean forward a little when they lean forward. While you do not want to mimic people, people who are on the same wave length mirror each other’s body language.
- **Let people finish their thoughts.**
- Stay **calm and neutral**.
- **Check your baggage** at the door: be sensitive to your preconceived notions and “buttons” that trigger a negative emotional response.
- Encourage **open-ended conversation** by using probing with phrases or questions such as “tell me about” or “what do you think about...?”.
- **Use supportive phrases or sounds** such as “uh-huh”, “I see”, “you don’t say”, “sure”, “okay”, “gotcha”, etc. These encourage the other person to speak and show that you are listening.
- **Paraphrase words and feelings** to make sure you have heard the message and to show empathy. For example: “You sound really angry about that.” “Sounds like you’ve just about had it.” “If I understand correctly, what you’d like me to do is ...”
- **Ask people to paraphrase for you.** Find a polite way of ensuring that people have understood you. “Could you summarize what we’ve discussed to make sure we are on the same page?” “Could you review the major deliverables to make sure that I’m going in the right direction?” This is also a very useful technique with children in addition to in the workplace.
- Avoid **“you” messages**, especially negative, absolute “you” messages. For example, avoid saying “you never take out the garbage.” Substitute “I” messages and deal only with the current situation. For example, “I feel frustrated when you don’t take out the garbage.” Share your feelings or perspective without “dumping” on the other person.
- **Put it in writing.** Verbal reminders can evolve into nagging so easily. Without saying a word you can communicate anything you need said. Leave humorous notes or emails for your partner. Notes are also a great way of saying “I love you”. At work, email can be a great way of following up on tasks you have discussed with a co-worker.
- **Use these eight words and phrases with your spouse/partner or child at least once a day:**
 - Thank you.
 - Tell me more.
 - You can do it.

How can I help?
How about a hug?
Please.
Good job. Good for you.
I love you.

- **Smile.** Smile more often than you frown. Try to speak to co-workers, customers, or your partner in a pleasant tone of voice instead of an angry one. Lightening up and using humor can work wonders.
- **Legs first, mouth second.** Instead of hollering downstairs into the basement, or into the next office, walk into the room where your spouse or co-worker is working before addressing them.
- **Mind your P's and Q's.** Speak to other people in the way you want them to speak to you.
- **Get on their radar screen first.** When you have something important to say to somebody, make sure you have connected first (eye contact, address them by name, have their attention) before you share your important message.

Positive Assertiveness

Just as active listening and validating are important steps in effective communication, positive assertiveness gives you an effective way to respond when you don't agree with someone. When you disagree, try positive assertiveness as an alternative instead of not responding at all or responding aggressively. It involves:

- Hearing and validating what the other person is communicating.
- Stating your position without attacking your listener.

An aggressive response such as, "I don't agree with you..." may provoke your listener. However, an assertive response such as, "I understand your point, but..." helps to keep communication flowing.

Practicing positive assertiveness, along with the first two techniques, active listening and validating, will help you become an effective communicator.

Stress Management

Reducing and managing stress can help make your time at work and at home more productive and rewarding. Practicing the following stress-reduction techniques will help you maintain balance in your life.

1. **Manage your time:** Focus on your goals and priorities by scheduling your time. Create a list of items to accomplish, and cross them off when you're done.
2. **Know your limits:** If a problem is beyond your control, find an alternate solution. Ask others for suggestions in resolving your dilemma; an objective eye may be helpful.

3. **Make time for fun:** Take a break from your daily routine to ease tension. Physical exercise or a change of scenery can help you relax.
4. **Try deep muscle relaxation:** Tense each muscle area in your body for 10 seconds. Slowly release the tension and you will begin to feel relaxed.
5. **Take care of yourself:** Eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest. This helps maintain your body's resistance to the physical symptoms of stress.

These techniques are designed to help you learn to manage stress, instead of letting it manage you.

Balancing Home & Work

Is your laundry basket as full as your "in" basket? Many of us today are struggling to balance full-time jobs with full-time responsibilities at home. Meeting the demands of an increasingly complex world means developing strategies for maintaining balance in our lives. Following are some practical tips for balancing home and work.

Prioritize

Determine what tasks you need to accomplish. Then rank them according to importance. Consider your own needs, as well as those of loved ones. If you must work on a Saturday, for example, you might plan a recreational activity with your family or friends for Sunday.

Establish Realistic Goals

Be flexible and realistic in planning your schedule. Focus on things you know you can accomplish. At the same time, learn to expect the unexpected. Have a plan for dealing with those surprise visits from relatives and unannounced meetings at work. By taking steps like these, you'll be better prepared to handle life's challenges.

Be Efficient

Develop ways to work smarter at home and at work, and encourage others in your household to save time as well. Combining or consolidating tasks may be more effective than trying to squeeze as many tasks as possible into the least amount of time.

Think Positively

Look on the bright side and try to have a sense of humor. While everyone feels sad, angry or frustrated sometimes, laughing can help ease difficult situations.

“11 Ways to Survive During Organizational Change”*

Be Prepared for Change. Like successful professional athletic teams, most businesses today must continually make changes to remain competitive. Think about how you might best respond to current and future changes. You will be more psychologically and emotionally ready, and more confident and secure in your day-to-day activities.

Express Sadness, Loss, Anxiety about the Future. When change happens, don't pretend it isn't painful. When people are let go or promoted, when organizational relationships or our own responsibilities change, there is a normal reaction of sadness, anxiety and loss. Don't deny the feelings; acknowledge them.

Protect your leisure time. There is always extra work to be done when companies undergo change. People work through lunch, can't find time for vacation, give up exercise, come in early and leave late or work over weekends. Realize that it is important to have some time for you each day, and to get away sometimes. You will be refreshed, more energetic, and more productive.

Don't ignore your family and friends. Spouses, children, other family members and friends can be excellent sources of emotional support when times are tough at work. But they won't be very supportive if all you do is neglect them. Sure work often takes priority, but family should be elevated to an equal priority. Don't emphasize only one area of your life and neglect the other.

Don't turn to alcohol, drugs, food, or other chemical coping strategies. When stress is high, people may look for fast and easy means of symptom relief for headaches, muscle aches, nervousness, irritability, and sleep disturbances. Avoid the temptation to use alcohol or drugs; watch out for tendencies to overeat or skip meals. While most of these strategies can make you feel better in the short run, they each have serious long-term consequences. Instead, try to exercise more, communicate more, set time aside each day to relax. Try to eat and sleep well. If you find yourself turning to drugs or alcohol or harmful behaviors, don't give in. Call your company's assistance program. Make an appointment with your doctor or other trusted health professional.

Remain upbeat and positive. Acknowledging any negative feelings actually improves your ability to remain upbeat and optimistic! When you're willing to look at all sides of your company's changes, your ability to notice the positives, as well as the negatives, improves. Then you can choose to focus on the positives, rather than dwell on the negatives.

Get creative. Most problems are open to creative, innovative solutions. What usually keeps these solutions from arising are our internal barriers and self-imposed restrictions.

Expand your value to the company. No matter what happens, this is a win-win strategy. The more value you offer, the better your prospects are in this job or any job.

Celebrate accomplishments. Look for ways to celebrate the tremendous effort everyone is putting in. You don't have to spend a lot; bring in team lunch, have a dress-down day, and have some fun.

Become more efficient. Whoever said “necessity is the mother of invention” spoke the truth. When you have so much work to do that you can't handle it any more by using your present routines and processes, become an innovator. We can always improve on the way we do things.

Rise to the challenge. See if you can view your situation as an exciting challenge instead of a problem. Remember, change is inevitable, but being stressed by change is not. It all depends on how you look at change and how you choose to respond to it.

*Excerpted from “18 Ways to Survive...,” Morton C. Orman, 1995, www.stresscure.com

Getting Help

If you would like more information, you can call your Magellan program number. To find out what services are available, check your employee benefits or call your local human services agency. You can also talk with someone you can trust, such as a doctor or nurse, local mental health professional or member of the clergy.